

People of Faith in a Difficult Time  
 1 Peter 3: 13-22  
 Sixth Sunday after Easter/Easter 6 Year A  
 Nativity, Bloomfield Twp  
 The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry  
 May 10, 2026

May the God who creates us, redeems us, and sustains us, be with us this day, and remain with us always. Amen

Good Morning!

About a year and half ago, when our diocese was anticipating the November 2024 elections we spent a number of months exploring the topic of Faith and Democracy. During one of these gatherings we had a speaker the author of *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. The author of the book Kristin Kobes Du Mez, herself a white evangelical answered a tough question posed to her. The question asked, was what is it that we should do, if by chance the administration that is elected is not an administration that upholds traditional Christian teachings. What should we do if the administration ignores Jesus' beatitudes, where he says,

*"Blessed are the Peacemakers, (Matthew 5:9) Blessed are those who show mercy...(Matthew 5:7).*

Or Jesus' teaching where he says,

*"You will inherit the Kingdom of God for when I was hungry you gave me to eat, when I was thirsty you gave me a drink, when I was naked you gave me clothes, when I was sick you tended to me, when I was in prison you visited me." (Matthew 25:35-36).*

"What is it we should do?" the person asked.

I remember Kristin Kobes Du Mez said, I'll paraphrase

*"What we need to remember is that the early Christian church was not founded to be hand in glove with the ruling class and the empire. That didn't happen for several more centuries when the Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity. Instead, the early church was always on the sidelines, made up of a variety of different people many of whom were from the margins and the oppressed. Kobes Du Mez continued, if an administration comes into power that does not embrace these teachings with their actions and policies, we need to more than ever be in the midst of our communities of faith. We need to be in them, studying scripture, praying and being very clear what our faith in Jesus Christ calls us to do. She said in those communities, we will find heroes. We will find people who are speaking out, living in tangible visceral ways their faith. These heroes will need to return to our Christian communities so that they may be fed and renewed and reminded of their call. And we will be able to offer that care to those heroes*

*and in turn we may well be changed and become like them. We too might become heroes and leaders, exemplars of our Christian faith.”*

I remember when I heard her say these words it took my breath away. Because then I knew all over again just how important it is to be the church, to be the tangible Body of Christ, offering hope to world. Showing a different way of being that is not linked to power, might, strength, dominion and oppression.

The first letter of Peter gives us some insights on how we might be in these communities of faith, offering hope and love and care to our fragile broken world.

The first and second letter of Peter may or may not have been written by the Apostle Peter. Scholars say, given the exquisite Greek in which these letters are composed, it seems somewhat unlikely that an uneducated Galilean like Peter would have written them. It's not impossible, but it's not likely. Instead they were probably written by someone who knew Peter and was moved by his witness and preaching, his leadership and his love, his profound sense in how Jesus' followers might live out Christ's teaching in the world.

The letters were likely composed as Nero was coming to power in Rome and persecution of Christians was beginning.

The author of these letters says to the people of the early Christian communities is what is now Turkey. The author writes,

*“Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer, for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear, what they fear and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you. yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear for when you are maligned those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil, (1Peter 3:13-18).*

The author of Peter is not just writing to members of the community but to the community as a whole enjoining them as a collective whole to be people of love and gracious kindness, to uphold the rule of law, as long as it does not violate, Christ's call. The author is also urging the Christian communities to be known as a place where people do good, regardless of how the community and individuals in the community are treated. This places of faith must embody Christ's call in all they do.

I believe in this time in our world. Where our government is launching wars without consent, blowing up boats off the coast of South America without legal justification, passing laws that end subsidies for health insurance that we are witnessing a political administration that is deeply hostile to the tenets, teachings of Jesus Christ.

So we must do our very best, to speak out against these abuses and to offer in whatever ways we can care for all of us who are on the margins. We must do good. We must be the Risen Body of Christ in every way shape and form we might. Let us continue to reach out and care for the immigrant and the refugee. Let us work for safer gun culture, let us feed the hungry, clothe the naked and care for all creatures of the earth. All the while being gracious, open, loving and kind

to everyone with whom we come in contact. For as the author of First Peter says, “We cannot return Evil for Evil.”